



**Queensland Rugby League
Wide Bay Division**

**Abbreviated History
May 2007**

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Introduction

This paper is a brief overview of the QRL Wide Bay Division history. It's purpose is to provide Mr Max Howell, Official Historian of the Queensland Rugby League with an overview of the development of the game in the Wide Bay Division. It draws heavily on the work of E.C. (Ted) Weber from his book, A Tribute to the Pioneers of Wide Bay Rugby League (1995). Many thanks must go to Mr Weber for the amount of work that he put into the research and compilation. The format is in a timeline sequence from the initial start of rugby league in 1909, through to the current day. Whilst this paper has limited the information to a brief view of issues of the time, the writer would refer those who are interested to read the full book and gain further knowledge.

QRL Wide Bay Division - A Brief Description

The QRL Wide Bay Division, one of five Divisions comprising the Queensland Rugby League, embraces a large area from Miriam Vale in the north to Bribie Island in the south and westward to Kingaroy.

There are five District Leagues affiliated with the QRL Wide Bay Division. Bundaberg Rugby League, Fraser Coast Rugby League, Central Burnett Rugby League (Monto, Eidsvold, Mundubbera), Sunshine Coast Gympie Rugby League (Gympie, Noosa, Nambour, Kawana, Maroochydore, Caloundra, Bribie Island, Caboolture) Northern Districts Rugby League (Gin Gin, Miriam Vale, Avondale, South Kolan, Biggenden). Six Junior Leagues Fraser Coast, Bundaberg, Central Burnett, South Burnett, Sunshine Coast and Gympie form the Wide Bay Divisional Junior Divisional Council. Five Local League Referee's Association form the Divisional Referee's Board.

The Headquarters of the Division is based at Maryborough with three full time employees, the Division Manager, Education and Development Officer and an Administration Assistant. There are two Operations Managers for Wide Bay South (Sunshine Coast/Gympie, South Burnett) based on the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay North (Bundaberg, Northern Districts, Fraser Coast, Central Burnett), based in Bundaberg. Australian Rugby League Development also has Development staff based in Maryborough and the Sunshine Coast covering the north and south of the Division. Australian Rugby League Development also has staff based in Brisbane who covers the southern end of the Sunshine Coast.

The Board of Delegates comprises a Chairman, Division Manager, Finance Director, and one Delegate from each of the Senior Leagues, Divisional Junior Council and the Divisional Referee's Co-ordinator.

1909 - The Emergence Of Rugby League In Wide Bay

Rugby League in Wide Bay has its origins in Maryborough where the game was first commenced largely because of the efforts of two men, Robert "Cope" Ferguson and "Did" Doyle a Maryborough Journalist and Sports Writer.

Ferguson went to New Zealand in 1907 and played Rugby Union at Waipawa in Wellington and with St James, while he was in New Zealand the first Rugby League Team went to England. It was christened the "All Golds" a reference to professionalism. At Sydney on the way over the famous "Dally" Messenger joined the team. The team was managed by Harry Baskerville who died in Brisbane on the return journey.

"Cope" Ferguson saw his first and only game of Rugby League in New Zealand when a benefit match was staged for Harry Baskerville's widow after the team returned home. He was impressed with the code and on his return to Maryborough recommended it to his friends.

Nothing was done until a letter was received from the Secretary of the Queensland Rugby League Harry Sunderland seeking to have the code established in Maryborough. It was then "Cope" Ferguson and "Did" Doyle took the initial steps to form a team.

The following article which appeared in the Maryborough Chronicle on September 9, 1909 headed, "AMATEUR V PROFESSIONALISM", summed up the debate on the two codes.

"There has been considerable talk in football circles of late as to advisableness or otherwise of Maryborough players coming under the direction of the Queensland Amateur League instead of the Q. R. U. On Saturday last a meeting was held in this connection, and though it was not decided to form a branch of the League a letter from the Brisbane was considered, offering to send a team here to play on Saturday, 18th instant. It was resolved to accept the invitation, and a Committee was appointed to make arrangements.

The following players were selected for Maryborough: Danny Concannon, "Spud" Hargreaves, "Billy" Maitland, Joe Concannon, "Teener" Anderson, Archie Anderson, "Billy Smith, George Crooks, "Waxie Pioch", Joe Dosseto (who played under the name of "Terror" Thompson), "Cope" Ferguson, Arthur Maitland, Tom Murphy, Jack McLellan, "Twinny" Robertson, "Switchy" Costello and Jim New.

Of course players taking part in the match are burning their boats as far as again playing under the auspices of the Q. R. U. are concerned.

As this game will have an important influence on the character of Maryborough football in the near future, the following leading article from the "Sydney Daily Telegraph" brought out by the defection of several members of the "Wallabies" to the League may be of interest:

On September 15 the Chronicle report headed BRISBANE v MARYBOROUGH

"Considerable interest is being evinced in the forthcoming intercity football match, Brisbane versus Maryborough, to be played under the Queensland Amateur League Rules, on Saturday next at the Showgrounds".

The Maryborough team, which has already been published, comprises almost the pick of the Maryborough footballers and they are being trained under the new rules by Mr Brackenrig, a member of the Australian team to defeat the Maoris this year. The Brisbane team is a most formidable one including Woodhead, Duffin, McGregor, Brackenrig, Ross and Harvey all of whom played for Australia this season. A fine exposition of football under the League rules should be the result, and seeing that it is acknowledged to provide fast spectacular games, the match will no doubt be witnessed by a large attendance."

Advertisements September 13 and 18, 1909.

**GRAND INTERCITY FOOTBALL MATCH
BRISBANE v MARYBOROUGH
UNDER LEAGUE RULES
SHOWGROUNDS
Saturday, 18th September.
ADMISSION, 6d EVERYONE.
FOOTBALL
Grand Inter-City Fixture,**

(Under Queensland Amateur Rugby League Rules, under which the brutality so prominent in the old game disappears)

**BRISBANE v MARYBOROUGH
To be preceded at 2.30 p. m. by a match between
The "Wallabies" and "Kangaroos".**

**SHOW GROUNDS
Saturday Afternoon, Sept. 18**

The Chronicle Report on Tuesday September 21 gave a graphic detail of the match.

"Between four and five hundred people made their way to the Showgrounds on Saturday to see the first game of football that has been played under League rules. What gave additional interest to the match was the fact of it being an intercity contest, Maryborough v Brisbane, and that in the Brisbane team were several International players.

The teams were:- Brisbane: Full-back, D. McGregor, 3/4, N. McGregor, W. A. Abrahams, Gault, B. Hooker, 5/8 H. Dickens, 1/2 D. Kelly, Forwards, A. Harvey, H. Brackenrig, A. Buckley, R. Jarrott, A. Moxley, T. Boyd. Maryborough: Full-back A. Maitland, 3/4 T. Murphy, R. Ferguson, J. McLellan, B. Robertson, 5/8 A. Andersen, 1/2 J. Costello, Forwards D. Concannon, W. H. Smith, J. Dossetto, J. New, A. Pioch, M. Anderson. Referee Mr J. Filhelly.

1910

Maryborough became the first centre in Wide Bay and Burnett District to form a Rugby League Executive, pioneering the first competition to be played under the new Rules. No record can be found of the inaugural meeting but an early photograph carrying the title "MARYBOROUGH RUGBY LEAGUE, FIRST EXECUTIVE SEASON 1910 gives the names of those who formed the first Committee. Patron 1. King, President W. Robertson, Secretary J. Costello, Treasurer, P. Macklin, D. Concannon, R. Ferguson (Wallaroos), G. Doyle, J. Dossetto (Natives), P. Woodhouse, H. J. Taylor (Glebe), A fourth team from the small mining town of Howard just north of Maryborough known as the Rangers joined the Competition in May and were represented on the League by A. Turnbull and L. Reaney. Seven teams affiliated, four Senior, Wallaroos, Natives, Glebe, Rangers, Juniors Glebe, Wallaroos and Cities.

On Saturday March 19, 1910 the first game under League Rules was played between Maryborough and Howard at Howard. The Maryborough Chronicle, Monday, March 21, 1910 reported that "A Maryborough Football team journeyed to Howard on Saturday to try conclusions with the local team under League Rules. The match resulted in a win to Howard by 13-9. The score stood in Maryborough team's favour 9-8, till just on full-time, when Howard scored another try and converted. For the Maryborough team A. Maitland goaled from three penalties and one try was scored. Howard scored three tries and two goals".

1911-1912

Rugby League was first introduced to Bundaberg in 1911 with a junior team under the administration of Tom Hennessy and George McAdam. The first match under the new code was an intercity match against Maryborough. The players had never played League before but had in the team a Sydney Reserve Grader Col Thorton who coached them for a week before the match. Bundaberg won 16-8.

The North Coast Rugby League was formed in 1912

The Sunshine Coast/Gympie Rugby Football League covers an area from Caboolture in the south to Gympie in the north and west to Kilcoy with a population base well over 300,000.

1911 the game broadened out with the towns of Howard and Torbanlea forming their own League and Gympie joining the ranks of Rugby League.

On Thursday May 25 a meeting held at the Tattersall's Hotel to form a Gympie Rugby League was presided over by Mr E. Carver.

The Isis League continued to function with matches being played between Cordalba, Appletree Creek, Dallarnil and Childers.

Rugby League continued to grow with intercity matches being played between Maryborough. Bundaberg, Burrum, Isis and Ipswich. Maryborough Rugby League Referee's held their second Annual General Meeting on May 24.

Two major events occurred in 1913 which would help to consolidate the code, the first was the formation of the Bundaberg and the second was an attempt, although it eventually folded from lack of support, the formation of a District League.

Rugby League continued to thrive in Isis and Burrum with representative teams from those Districts continuing to play against Maryborough and Bundaberg.

1915

Rugby League became established in Central Burnett with the formation of a Club at Gayndah. The Club was known as the North Gayndah Football Club.

1919

Despite four years of War which decimated the ranks of Rugby League, 1919 capped off a decade which saw Rugby League assume a dominant position as a winter sport in the Wide Bay and Burnett District, a position it would maintain in the years ahead. Public interest was at an all time high and the League would establish itself more firmly in the twenties by the formation a District League to control and develop the code even more fully. The Birch Cup Competition was played between Maryborough, Bundaberg, Gympie and Burrum. 3,000 people gathered at the Bundaberg Cricket grounds to see the home side play in their first Intercity Final against Gympie. The game ended in a 6 all draw. Gympie lodged a protest with the QRL on the grounds that there was no provision in the Rules that a player must keep his boot on. Gympie apparently won the appeal and are named on the trophy.

1920 - Formation of The Wide Bay and Burnett Rugby League

From 1920 to 1924 a series of developments took place which consolidated the Code in the Wide Bay and Burnett Region. The first was the formation of the Wide Bay and Burnett Rugby League to govern and control Rugby League. International teams Great Britain and New Zealand visited the region to play District teams. Expansion of the code into the South Burnett region covering Murgon, Wondai and Kingaroy. The game spread to the South taking in Nambour which would be known as the North Coast region and to the Central Burnett taking in Gayndah. This expansion ensured that public interest had firmly switched to Rugby League to the exclusion of the Union game and consolidated the Code as the number one winter sport.

The move to form a District League came on May 4, 1920 when a meeting of the Delegates representing the whole of the Football Leagues from throughout Wide Bay and Burnett District was held in Maryborough. Those present were Messrs P. J. Coombe (Gympie), S. Hogan (South Burnett), H. Christensen (Burrum), D. Donnelly (Isis), J. B. Clarke (Bundaberg), A. Thacker and G. Smoothey (Maryborough). It was agreed that a Wide Bay, and Burnett District Rugby League be formed comprising all Leagues in the District with power to add. The Officials elected details and rules and regulations were drawn up and agreed upon.

The following Officials were elected: Patron Mr G. Buss (Bundaberg), President Mr A. Thacker (Maryborough), Vice President Mr P. J. Coombe (Gympie), and Hon. Secretary Mr Geo. N. Smoothey (Maryborough).

1921

The Wide Bay and Burnett held its second Annual Meeting at Gympie on June 26, 1921. Present P. J. Coombe (Gympie), J. B. Clarke (Bundaberg), A. Turnbull (Burrum), S. Hogan (South Burnett), B. Kerr (Isis), N. Hood (North Coast), and W. Lock (Maryborough) who also represented Gayndah.

The meeting also decided to accept the North Coast and Gayndah Rugby League as members.

1922 - Changing Governance Structures

The Chronicle (Maryborough) reported that the Queensland Rugby League had undergone a material change. The Metropolitan body having been formed into separate District League today's meeting will be of exceptional interest to country bodies, in view of the fact District League representation on the Queensland controlling body will supersede the former system of representation by delegates from each of separate country centres, together with 14 delegates from the Metropolitan Clubs. The controlling body is now governed by two delegates from the Metropolis and two from each of the country centres. It is anticipated that the new order of things should produce better results for country footballers generally. It has been established that Mr Alex Leitch was elected President and W. H. Lock Secretary and Delegate to the Queensland Rugby League. Other Delegates A. Leitch (Murgon), P. J. Coombe (Gympie), N. Hood (North Coast).

Seven District Leagues, Maryborough, Gympie, North Coast, Bundaberg, South Burnett, Burrum and Isis were now playing in the Birch Cup Competition. In the semi finals North Coast defeated South Burnett 7-4 to participate in their first Wide Bay final.

1924

Rugby League took a new direction in 1924 switching fixtures from Saturday to Sunday. Alarmed by falling support for the code in 1923 Maryborough despite strenuous opposition from the Clergy decided to experiment with Sunday football. Maryborough pioneered the switch to Sunday matches and with it came immediate success with increased attendances. Other Leagues decided to follow suit.

Another League from the Mary Valley was admitted to the Association making eight in all. A new trophy for Inter-district Competition was donated by the then President Mr. A Leitch to be played for a period of five years, the team winning twice in succession or most times out of five to be the possessors. It would be known as the Leitch Cup. The fixtures were Maryborough v South Burnett (Murgon), North Coast v Mary Valley (Gympie), Gayndah v Isis (Maryborough), Gympie v Bundaberg). The Secretary W. Lock tendered his resignation on account of illness and it was decided to place on record the good service rendered by him whilst Secretary of the League.

In July 1924, Maryborough hosted their first International match when the touring British team played Maryborough. The Australian Rugby League Board of Control (later the Australian Rugby League) was formed in December 1924 to administer the running of the national team.

1926

Seven teams Maryborough, Bundaberg, Gympie, Kilkivan, Gayndah, South Burnett, and North Coast nominated for the Leitch Cup. Gympie defeated Maryborough 7-0 thus becoming Wide Bay Champions.

1927

Seven teams Maryborough, Bundaberg, Gympie, South Burnett, Gayndah, North Coast, and Burrum contested the Leitch Cup Competition. In the semi finals Gympie defeated Bundaberg 15-11 and Maryborough defeated Gayndah 18-0.

1928

The League enjoyed a successful season and coupled with a grant of £120 from the Queensland Rugby League ensured a healthy financial position, so much so that £1.20 was distributed to the affiliated Leagues. Bundaberg was allocated the Wide Bay match against the Great Britain Touring team on July 4. For the match against Great Britain the Bundaberg team was strengthened by the inclusion of Gympie players E. Fraunfelder, F. Cartwright and W. Brereton. Great Britain won 61 - 3.

Six teams, Maryborough, Bundaberg, Gympie, South Burnett, Gayndah, and North Coast contested the Leitch Cup Competition. The final was played between South Burnett and Gympie at Gympie. Gympie defeated South Burnett 18-5.

1930

1930 was the beginning of the "Great Depression" which would last till 1939, it brought untold hardship to millions of people in Australia Millions of people on the dole, moving round the country looking for work, trying to live on handouts, rations and relief work when it was available. Against this background Rugby League continued to thrive despite a number of controversies. Maryborough completed a successful intercity season defeating Bundaberg and Gympie in home and away matches to win the Federal Brewery Cup.

The Leitch Cup Final was played in Maryborough with Maryborough defeating South Burnett by 48-6 to become undefeated Wide Bay Champions.

1931

Bundaberg by letter issued a challenge to Maryborough which was published in the local press. The report headed "BUNDY" CHALLENGES! FOOTBALL WAR Throw in two Cups! That both Leagues' interest in the Federal and Leitch Cups, for this year's competition goes to the winner of the game. Naturally enough Maryborough rejected the challenge and this was subsequently backed up by the Wide Bay League on the grounds that the rules had been already set for both competitions and the League would not countenance any interference or vary them to suit the whims of one League.

Out of this strife was born a Cup donated by a Bundaberg Company McLeod and Sons for competition between Maryborough and Bundaberg as a Challenge Cup.

1932

Gympie was awarded its first International match with the touring Great Britain team playing Wide Bay in June at the Normanby Grounds. Alex Leitch was re-elected as President of Wide Bay League and Wally Clarke (Maryborough) was elected Secretary Treasurer to replace Jack Demaine. Playing scintillating football the Englishmen defeated Wide Bay 56-17. The Englishmen gave a fine exposition of the code ever witnessed locally. The crowd paying £263/10/- was the largest ever seen at the Normanby grounds.

Intercity competitions for the Leitch Cup and the Federal Brewery Cup were played for during the year. Bundaberg won the Leitch Cup on a forfeit from Gympie because Gympie League could not observe the decree of the Wide Bay League to play the final in Bundaberg on Sunday October 2. Bundaberg made it a double winning the Federal Brewery Cup.

1933

Leitch Cup fixtures June 25 Bundaberg v Maryborough (Maryborough), North Coast v Gympie (Nambour), South Burnett v Central Burnett. Federal Cup and Junior Docker Cup fixtures to commence on May 21. In the Leitch Cup Final Gympie had a decisive 15-0 win over Bundaberg at the Normanby Grounds.

This win gave Gympie two wins in five years of Competition equal to Maryborough's two wins in the same period. A dispute arose over who should possess the Leitch Cup outright.

The Wide Bay and Burnett Rugby League held a special meeting to determine the outright possession of the Cup. The rule which applied to the Cup was that the team winning most times over five years becomes the permanent holders of the Cup. In the event of two or more Leagues finishing equal on wins, the winner be determined on aggregate points. On that basis Maryborough with the best aggregate points won the Cup outright.

1934

A new trophy the Bulimba Cup was donated to replace the Leitch Cup which was won outright by Maryborough last year. The Cup would be played for over a period of five years with the League having most wins gaining outright possession of the trophy.

The Berger Cup was donated for competition between Maryborough, Bundaberg and Gympie.

1935 - 1939 - Plagued By Controversy

The first year was completed without problems, but that was the lull before the storm. The following years were plagued by controversy. In 1936 a war of words erupted between Wide Bay and Queensland Rugby League Officials over Wide Bay being left off the Itinerary of the Touring British Rugby League. Dissatisfaction with the control of the game in Maryborough in 1938 split the League with three Clubs switching to Union.

1935

During the year Maryborough played a match against an Aboriginal side from Barambah (Cherbourg), Barambah won 16-13.

In the semi-finals of the Bulimba Cup Maryborough defeated Bundaberg 20-4, Gympie defeated South Burnett 3-0 setting the stage for top clash between the two centres in the final at Maryborough. Gympie just managed to stave off a great finishing effort by Maryborough, kicking a penalty goal to win the final 10-8.

1936

In the Bulimba Cup semi-finals Maryborough defeated Bundaberg after extra time was played 11-5 and Gympie defeated South Burnett. The final was played at Eskdale Park Maryborough defeated Gympie 13-9; it was the only time that Maryborough had beaten Gympie all season. It was a hard fought game with Maryborough forwards demonstrating their superiority and the backline dominated the situation.

4,000 people paying £325 turned out for Wide Bay versus Great Britain game at the Maryborough Showground's and were given a great exhibition of Rugby League. Great Britain won 35 8. Ten of the fifteen players came from the local Wallaroos Club.

1937

Six Leagues Maryborough, Bundaberg, Gympie, South Burnett, Lower South Burnett, Central Burnett contested the Bulimba Cup. The Berger Cup and John Hunter Cup were run in conjunction with the Bulimba Cup. Messrs Gataker and Sons agents for XXXX Castlemaine Beer donated the Fourex Cup for competition between Central, South and Lower South Burnett. Wide Bay travelled to Ipswich to play the Ipswich Bulimba Cup team. Ipswich without Vic Hey defeated Wide Bay 61-5.

1938

A row between three Clubs Rovers, Brothers and Natives and the Maryborough Rugby League on the way the League was being run saw those three Clubs switch to Rugby Union. This left Maryborough with only one Club but the League decided to concentrate on the Intercity Competition. At the Annual General Meeting of the Wide Bay League confidence was expressed that despite the defection of certain Maryborough Clubs Rugby League would hold its own in Wide Bay.

The League decided that a Challenge Cup be inaugurated between all affiliated Leagues plus Burrum and Childers. Maryborough appointed former Kangaroo winger Harry Robison to coach the representative team. In the final of the Bulimba Cup at Gympie, Gympie defeated Bundaberg 20-11. Gympie became outright winners of the Cup.

1939

A new Cup for Inter-city Competition was donated by Mr Jim Core to be competed for over five years, the same conditions as the Bulimba Cup. The Eldridge Shield donated by the Wallaroos Club was accepted and competed for by the juniors. The Bob Kerr Challenge Cup held by Maryborough subject to challenges from the Leagues in order, Gympie, Lower South Burnett, Central Burnett, Bundaberg, North Coast. The meeting agreed to allow the Vic Jensen Cup to be introduced by Gympie Rugby League to Wide Bay. The Cup would be competed for between Gympie, South Burnett, and North Coast. In the semi-finals of the Core Cup Gympie defeated Lower-South Burnett 31-16, Maryborough defeated Bundaberg 15-3.

In the final at Eskdale Park Maryborough Rugby League earned the right to be considered the Champion League of Wide Bay by its convincing 21 5 defeat of Gympie for the Core Cup.

On July 23, New South Wales played Wide Bay at Albert Park Gympie. New South Wales ran out easy winners 51-13. Winger Merv Denton scored 7 tries.

1940 - 1945 - Second World War Intervenes

Sport became the casualty as its young men enlisted in the armed Services. The first two years Wide Bay League managed to maintain its intercity competitions but when petrol rationing came into force those competitions went into recess. The Wide Bay League maintained its organisation during the war years and was ready to spring into action once the hostilities ceased. Whilst Maryborough, Gympie, Bundaberg with some assistance from the armed services kept local competitions going South Burnett and North Coast went into recess.

1946 - 1949 - Post War Resurgence

1948

Secretary of the QRL Eric Simmonds attended the Wide Bay League AGM and warned Delegates that strenuous attempts were being made to undermine Queensland Rugby League in order that the Constitution of that organisation could be destroyed. The attempt was being made by certain sections who wanted to split the body in two separate bodies City and Country. The system operating in N.S.W. gave the City 20 votes to 2, whereas in Queensland City and Country had equal voting right on the QRL. The Core Cup was in its fifth year with Maryborough 2 wins, Gympie and Bundaberg 1 each. If Maryborough won this year they would become the holder of the trophy. If Bundaberg or Gympie win it would be a play off for the trophy and would be played in Maryborough as a gesture to the donor Jim Core.

Maryborough made a clean sweep of all trophies winning Berger Cup and Bob Kerr Challenge Cup, juniors Eldridge Shield, Third Grade McLeod Cup.

Maryborough went through the Core Cup Competition undefeated. In the Final against Gympie at Eskdale Park winning 61 0 established an all time record score at League Headquarters for inter city senior games.

In 1949, Bundaberg won the Berger Cup, Eldridge Shield (juniors), Maryborough the Third Grade McLeod Cup.

The forties came to an end with Rugby League flourishing within the nine affiliated District Leagues. This was a good lead to greater achievements in the 50's.

1950 - 1954 Wide Bay Players Gain State and Australian Selection

The period from 1950-54 and the interest in Rugby League was at an all time high, this interest was created by a strong Intercity Competition and a number of top players in the various area. Such was the standard that a number of players were selected for Queensland and Australia, giving the area its best representation at that level for more than 20 years.

In 1953, when the Wide Bay team was announced to play the American All Stars no Maryborough players were included. The Maryborough League was so incensed that a resolution was moved that Maryborough withdraw from the Wide Bay League over the matter, but this lapsed for the want of a seconder. Eventually R. Connell (Maryborough) was included in the team with Don Bowes as a reserve.

1954

In what amounted to little more than a hard training run the Great Britain Rugby League tourists defeated Wide Bay 60-14. Although Harris won a majority of set scrums for the Englishmen, penalties favoured the home side by more than 20 to 1. Attendance 5,912, Gate Takings £1147/11.

Six teams Maryborough, Bundaberg, Gympie, Lower South Burnett, Cherbourg and North Coast contested the Core Cup. At Nambour in the Final Bundaberg defeated North Coast 20-5.

1955 - 1959 Bundaberg Dominates Wide Bay District Championships

In 1955, six teams Maryborough, Bundaberg, Gympie, L. South Burnett, Cherbourg and North Coast contested the Core Cup. The Wide Bay League decided to play the Core Cup Final in Maryborough. This was subject to a protest from Bundaberg League who threatened not to come to Maryborough and threatened to withdraw from the Wide Bay League and join Central Queensland. Bundaberg also protested against Maryborough being allocated the game against New Zealand in 1956. Bundaberg claimed they have been finalists in the last five Core Cups, but the final had never been played on their grounds.

Bundaberg won the Core Cup Final 24-16 in the last ten minutes of the match at Eskdale Park when they scored two tries and converted one to give them a winning margin.

1956

On June 24, under the worst possible conditions the Kiwis defeated Wide Bay 29-5 at Eskdale Park. Rain fell throughout the game and players found it impossible to retain a foothold on the slippery turf. However both sides endeavoured to throw the ball around but movements constantly broke down because players fell or failed to handle the greasy ball. Attendance 1,325. Gate £349.

The Maori League Touring side defeated Wide Bay 31-6 at Bundaberg. Star of the match was the Maori Centre, George Turner, whose display was the best seen in the Wide Bay since the French half back Jean Dop. Wide Bay's real weakness was in the forwards where only two players came up to International standard. They were C. Weier (Gympie) and Tom Drysdale (Maryborough).

Bundaberg won the Kerr Cup and the McLeod Cup; Maryborough won the Junior Hood Cup.

1957

The Wide Bay Referee's Appointment Board resigned in a body after their recommendation of Mr. V. Simpson (Maryborough) to officiate at the Mackay trials was rejected by the Wide Bay Rugby League. The Noosa League was directed to affiliate with the North Coast League which was the ruling body in that area.

Six teams Maryborough, Bundaberg, Gympie, Lower South Burnett, North Coast and Cherbourg contested the Core Cup Competition. In the final at Bundaberg, Bundaberg defeated Gympie 52 23.

1958

President George McLeod was nominated for Life Membership of the Queensland Rugby League. The Queensland Rugby League accepted the nomination making him the second Wide Bay official to receive a Life Membership of that body.

At Bundaberg when Wide Bay met Great Britain, Wide Bay played with grim determination to score 25 points against Great Britain's 50.

1959

An application from the Upper Burnett League to affiliate was deferred till next year.

George McLeod began his 10th term as President of the Wide Bay and Burnett League when he was re-elected unopposed at the Annual General meeting held in Maryborough on February 8. Present at the meeting G. McLeod (Maryborough), E. Elwing (Gympie), J. B. Quinn (Bundaberg), W. Venardos (North Coast), G. Robinson (South Burnett) H. Michel (Cherbourg), N. Saunders (Wide Bay Referee's), W. Kaiser Secretary Treasurer.

In June, Wide Bay played the Kiwis at Bundaberg. The Kiwis gave a dazzling exhibition of fast precision football to over run Wide Bay 62-0. Wide Bay held the Kiwis to a 17-0 lead at half time, but lapsed in the second half when hit by injuries.

1960 - 1964 - Stability the Key to Success

During the first five years of the sixties Wide Bay and Burnett Rugby League enjoyed a period of no changes in the administration of the game. This period of stability was the key to successfully building a representative team which would become State Champions in the second half of the decade. South Burnett, Maryborough and Bundaberg dominated the Intercity Competitions sharing the titles of Wide Bay Champions.

Stability was the key word with G. McLeod being re-elected unopposed at the Annual General Meeting held on February 14 at the Royal Hotel Maryborough. Attending the meeting were G. McLeod (Maryborough), E. Elwing (Gympie), J. B. Quinn (Bundaberg), G. Robinson (South Burnett), W. Venardos (North Coast), R. Wilson (Cherbourg), N. Saunders (Referees), W. Kaiser Secretary Treasurer.

On June 19 1960, Maryborough hosted the Wide Bay v France match. The touring French Rugby League team had its most impressive win of its Australian Tour when it completely outfoxed Wide Bay to win 33 10 at Eskdale Park. The Frenchman scored seven tries to two and piled up their biggest total since their Australian Tour began.

1962

Approval was given for Isis to affiliate with the Bundaberg Rugby League. The Wide Bay Referees affiliation was accepted with conditions. The League approved the £1,500 transfer fee on E. Rasmussen by Bundaberg Brothers. The League decided that due to a lack of interest in the Kerr, Hood and McLeod Cup these competitions to be discontinued. The League changed its jersey design deleting the broken stripe re-placing it with a full Maroon and White trimmings.

1965 - 1969 The First State and Country Championship Trophy

During this five year period Wide Bay Rugby League reaped the benefits of all the hard work done in developing the code during the fifties and early sixties. Wide Bay produced a team in 1966 that swept aside challenges from all Divisions to win both the Country and State Championships. Bundaberg dominated the Intercity Competitions. In 1969 Gympie won their first Wide Bay title in 29 years. The period would also be tinged with sadness with the deaths of two long serving officials President George McLeod and Jim Hood Patron and Auditor.

North Coast Rugby League since the 1969 annual meeting has firmly established itself as the Sunshine Coast Rugby League.

1970 - 1974 - Golden Years for Wide Bay Teams

1970 through 1974 were good years for Wide Bay teams featuring in three Carlton Cup Finals winning two. Wide Bay won two Thiess Toyota Championship Finals, defeated Toowoomba four years in a row in the Annual Nash Shield Competition played between the two Divisions. They also won their way into the State Championship final against Brisbane. The Under 18 team won the Trades and Labour Council Divisional Competition.

1970

The 1970 season opened with the Annual General Meeting held on January 18 at Maryborough. Present R. Stafford Chairman, J. Wotherspoon Sec/Treas. J. B. Quinn (Bundaberg), D. Tanner (Gympie), P. IszIaub (Lower South Burnett), W. Venardos (North Coast), F. Howell (Referees), D. Stephensen (juniors).

Election of Officers: President R. Stafford, Vice-President J. B. Quinn, QRL Delegates R. Stafford, W. Venardos, proxy D. Tanner. Sec/Treas. J. Wotherspoon, QRL Management Committee R. Stafford. Auditor A. Wallace. Appeals Committee R. Stafford, J. B. Quinn, P. IszIaub. D. Tanner was made a Life Member.

The North Coast League was given permission to change its name to Sunshine Coast Rugby League.

1975 - 1979 Lean Years For Wide Bay Teams

After many years of being at the top, the Wide Bay juggernaut which was so successful faced a slump in fortunes being forced to play second fiddle to other Divisional teams. This situation was brought about by the retirement of many experienced players, who had been the mainstay of the successful campaigns through the first half of the 70's.

1975

The Intercity Competitions the backbone of the Wide Bay Rugby League continued to provide a stepping stone to the ambitions of many young players wishing to reach the top.

Wide Bay opened their season with a Carlton Cup match against newcomers Gold Coast at Southport. Wide Bay recorded a good 20 0 win over the Gold Coast.

At Bundaberg the touring French Rugby League team scored a convincing win over Wide Bay in a crowd pleasing game. After both teams had levelled 10 all in the first half France took control in the second session to win 36 10.

In the 47th Battalion Memorial Battalion Wide Bay Championship Sunshine Coast defeated Bundaberg 33 10. Bundaberg won the U18 Keith Perrins Shield Championship.

1976

The season opened on a great note with Maryborough winning their first pre season Caltex Trial at Kingaroy, outclassing South Burnett in the final 48 15

In the mid week Amco Cup Competition played at Rockhampton, North Queensland outclassed Wide Bay winning 21 11.

The Carlton Cup fixtures opened with Wide Bay playing Gold Coast at Gympie. Underdogs Wide Bay defeated Gold Coast 31 23 despite losing the scrums and penalties.

In the final of the 47th Battalion, Maryborough had a thrilling win over South Burnett 25 to 23. Bundaberg won the Under 18 Keith Perrin Shield.

1977

Wide Bay again participated in the Amco Cup Competition, losing to Central Queensland on a penalty count back.

NSW Country defeated Wide Bay 31 to 20 at Wondai.

Sunshine Coast defeated Bundaberg 26 to 15 to win the 47th Battalion Trophy. South Burnett won the Under 18 Wide Bay title.

1978

Wide Bay defeated Central Queensland in the Amco Cup Competition 12-3 in Maryborough, but lost to Riverina in Griffith 43 to 4.

Sunshine Coast defeated Maryborough 32 points to 10 to win the 47th Battalion trophy. In the Under 18, South Burnett was victorious again.

Wide Bay was defeated by the touring New Zealand team at Gympie 54 points to 8.

1980 - 1984 Looking to the Future. A New Direction

In line with the Eric White Report, Rugby League administration would take a new direction, the Queensland Rugby League would become the major administrative body in the State and at a local District level the responsibility would be that of Divisions of the Queensland Rugby League. A State League competition would be implemented that would involve Divisional teams and Brisbane Clubs. The name of the League was changed to the QRL Wide Bay and Burnett Division. The League would appoint its first full time Secretary/Coaching Director.

At the Annual General Meeting, the League was informed by the Chairman of the Queensland Rugby League that as from November 17, 1980 the League was no longer a Corporate Body but a Limited Company. Because of certain requirements of the Companies Act and because District Leagues were Divisions of the Queensland Rugby Football League Limited, the Divisional Leagues were obliged to conform with the requirements.

1985 – 1989

1985

After three lean years in the State League, Officials were concerned that unless it made a concentrated effort to field a competitive team it would be the easy beats of the State League Competition. The situation changed in 1985 with a more dedicated and better prepared side finishing in sixth position to win their first Country Championship since 1974. It was a good year for Officials of the Wide Bay League with Chairman John Garrahy being appointed Co Manager of the Australian team to New Zealand and Board of Delegates member Ted Weber appointed Co Manager of the Queensland Country Tour of the minor Australian States. J. B. Quinn Qld and Australian Selector, P. Goener Chairman Qld Referee's Association. For the first time Wide Bay awarded a major game to Central Burnett with Mundubbera hosting a Kentucky Fried pre season game.

The season commenced with the League holding its first Administrator's Seminar at the Gympie Forestry Centre on February 10. The Seminar was attended by all Officials of Leagues, Clubs and Referee's Associations. The Gin Gin Club extended an invitation to League Officials to open their new Sports Ground. Former Victorian State Coaching Director Mike Cullen was appointed as Assistant Coaching Director. Castlemaine Perkins became the major sponsors of League Premierships. Bundaberg \$3,500 Maryborough \$3,000, Gympie \$1,500, Sunshine Coast, South Burnett \$2,000. South Burnett was unable to take up the sponsorship as they were committed to a local sponsor. Jersey Sponsorship of \$500 was given to five local Leagues for their A Grade representative teams.

1986

In 1986 Wide Bay continued the run they started in 1985 winning back to back Championships. From the Wide Bay trials at Maryborough the team was selected to play in the pre season Kentucky Fried Competition. The squad S. Roselen (B), P. Ovens (G), R. Watson (SB), C. Taylor (SC), M. Connell (G) R. Thorley (M), S. Kavanagh (SC), R. Harch (B), D. O' Farrell (G), S. McDonald (M), M. Pope (B), R. Berkery (M), D. Booth (B), R.Reddcliffe (SB), N. Sempf (SB), B. Hunter (SB), G. Parker (M).

In the pre season games Wide Bay lost to Toowoomba 10-28, defeated Gold Coast 28-16 and Central Queensland 18-12.

At the January meeting Ray Hockley resigned as Coaching Director Administrator through ill health. Applications were called for the position with Bob Cutmore being appointed to the position. A decision was made to allow the Central Burnett to enter the 47th Battalion Memorial Intercity Competition. A direction was issued that it was compulsory for mini and mod football be played on a non competitive basis.

1987

Four Wide Bay personnel were appointed to Queensland team positions. R. Ashdown (SC) Qld Residents team, V. Brennan (G) Manager Qld U19 team, B. Reed (M) Trainer Qld U16 team, V. Beardmore (M) Manager Qld U16 team. L Geeves Queensland and Australian Selector. P. Goener was re elected President of the Qld Referees' Association. XXXX Premiership Prize Money for the Division a total of \$19,509. The money was to sponsor all the League Premiership and had to be allocated to winners and runners up.

At the beginning of the year Wide Bay introduced a Talent Squad for U19 players and this was well attended and successful. The Wide Bay League gave financial support to the Wide Bay Referees' seminar. Gympie won its consecutive Wide Bay 47th Battalion Memorial Shield Championship defeating Sunshine Coast 48-22. Sunshine Coast won the U19 Wide Bay Championship.

A decision was made that because the Northern District Rugby League was not affiliated no Leagues, Clubs or Association were to arrange services or matches with them till otherwise advised.

In the aftermath of the death of John Garrahy Bob Cutmore accepted a position with the newly formed Broncos Club and resigned as Secretary of the Division. Don Holland was appointed Secretary Administrator of the QRL Wide Bay and Burnett Division.

1988

In the State League Wide Bay improved their position on the previous year finishing on six points and in sixth position. The Score line was: Maryborough lost 24 14 Seagulls Diehards, Nambour lost 22 4 East's, Gympie won 40-4 Logan City, Bundaberg won 42-14 North's, Murgon won 28 16 South's. The International match between Wide Bay and the touring Great Britain Touring side was played at Gympie. Wide Bay put in a grand performance to push Great Britain all the way before going down 14-0. Attendance 3,000. Gate \$15,952 00.

John Reddy was appointed as full time Coaching Director for the Wide Bay Rugby League.

Beerwah won the Inaugural J. J. Garrahy Shield Competition. In A Grade, South Burnett defeated Sunshine Coast 48-22 to win the Intercity 47th Battalion Memorial Final. South Burnett made it a double winning the U19 title.

The entry of the Bronco Colts U21 into the Sunshine Coast Competition caused a rift between the Broncos and the Queensland Rugby League. The matter was resolved in time for the Colts to take their place in the A Grade Competition in 1989.

1989

After discussion with QRL and Wide Bay Officials in 1998 and certain undertakings were given Northern Districts Rugby League joined the QRL Wide Bay Division. T. Anderson became the Delegate to Wide Bay Rugby League.

Wide Bay opened its representative season with the Kissane Cup match against Toowoomba/South West at Maryborough. Wide Bay won the Cup for the first time defeating Toowoomba/South West 21 12.

The 47th Battalion Memorial Intercity Competition continued as a split Division the same as in 1988. Sunshine Coast, Maryborough, Central Burnett formed one Division. Bundaberg, South Burnett and Gympie forming the second Division.

1990 - 1994 - Turbulent Years

1990

In February the Board of Delegates accepted a recommendation that the Wide Bay Rugby League set up a Divisional Office at 164 Bazaar Street Maryborough (1st Floor), at a rental of \$264.44 a month, \$6,250 was allocated to fund the fittings and furniture and a three year lease be taken out with an option. The Wide Bay Rugby League Office was officially opened on Saturday May 12 by the Chairman of the Queensland Rugby League Tom Drysdale.

A Sponsorship of \$31,148 was made available by Castlemaine Perkins for all League Premierships, Intercity and the J. J. Garrahy Memorial Club Championship. E. C. Weber wrote a Short History of the 47th Battalion and the 47th Battalion Memorial Trophy and Rugby League as tribute to those who sponsored the trophy.

Wide Bay opened the football season with a trial game against the Broncos at Bundaberg which was won by the Broncos.

1991

A debate took place on the position of Gympie Rugby League with two senior Clubs continuing to function as a separate body with voting power on the QRL Wide Bay League. The matter was unresolved with the two Gympie Clubs being given permission to play in the Sunshine Coast Competition for the 1991 season.

In 1991 Gympie Brothers RFLC and Wanderers RFLC officially amalgamated and the name of the Sunshine Coast Rugby League was changed to the Sunshine Coast/Gympie Rugby Football League.

1994

The season opened on a high note with the St George Rugby League Club accepting an invitation to play Wide Bay in Maryborough on February 27.

On March 26 Wide Bay transferred its headquarters to Strongweb Arcade Bazaar Street. The Office housed its two full time Officials and a Secretary and as well an area devoted to marketing football gear. The store and office was officially opened by the Mayor of Maryborough Cr Alan Brown.

In the Wide Bay Championship Final at Beerwah, Bundaberg defeated Sunshine Coast Gympie 34-18 to win the 47th Battalion Memorial Shield. South Burnett won the U19 Wide Bay Championship Final.

1996 - ARL/Super League

1996 will go down in history as the year the game faced its greatest upheaval. In October, the full bench of the Federal Court cleared the way for Super League to begin.

There is no doubt that the impact of the ARL/Super League battle was felt right throughout Country Queensland with supporters divided on the merits of each of the warring parties. The game was suffering in the Country through lack of finance and to see hundreds of millions of dollars being wasted on legal expenses and outrageous payments to players. The 1996 season was a good one with the Division reaching its goals set in 1995. The Under 17 and 19 Emerging Talent Camps were a huge success with the teams achieving far better results at the Queensland Rugby League Trials held in Gladstone.

The year has been something of an anti climax with a complete win by the Australian Rugby League in the early part of the year in the ARL/Super League case, and in the latter part of the year the Appeal by News Limited so convincingly in their favour.

Country Officials were concerned that the game would survive in the QRL Wide Bay Division.

Maryborough/Hervey Bay Senior and South Burnett Under 19 representative teams were successful in their respective 1996 47th Battalion campaigns.

The Division ran a very successful Level 1 Administration Course in conjunction with ASSA at no cost to the participants. 27 Candidates attended the course with 22 being successful.

1997

Sunshine Coast/Gympie was successful in their 47th Battalion campaigns, winning A Grade, Under 19 and Under 17 competitions.

On October 7, Rupert Murdoch announced that he was confident that there would be a single competition in 1998 and in the following months the National Rugby League (NRL), jointly owned by the ARL and News Limited was formed. Although Super League damaged the public perceptions and financial standing of rugby league in Australia, a number of concepts that it introduced lived on into the new millennium.

1998

47th Battalion results were A Grade South Burnett U19 Sunshine Coast/Gympie

1998 saw the amalgamation of the two Rugby League factions but for the QRL Wide Bay Division it was a tough year with limited finance to operate with.

With a limited amount of finance available, 1998 was a year of marking time maintaining those specifics that would ensure that when things changed for the better the Division would be able to move forward to restore activities for the betterment of the game of Rugby League. Through tight budget restriction the Division was forced to dispense with the services of Secretary Judy Wore which had a marked impact on the efficiency of the out put from the Office.

1999

The Division maintained the same format for the 47th Battalion competition as in 1998 with a great weekend of Rugby league hosted by Northern Districts and held at Childers during April.

The finals were held at Caloundra on a very wet day with Sunshine Coast/Gympie teams being successful in both the A and U/19 grades against Maryborough/Hervey Bay and South Burnett respectively.

In 2000, the 47th Battalion will revert to the previous format where all teams will play each other.

The Wide Bay Bulls played two matches, one against Toowoomba where bad light stopped play at 18 all in the second half and against Central Queensland who defeated them at Rockhampton. The Junior Bulls had a reasonable State Carnival but failed to improve on 1998,

47th Battalion results, A Grade Sunshine Coast/Gympie, Under 19 Sunshine Coast/Gympie.

2000 - A New Millenium

In April 2000, the Division Development Officer, Damian Lindeberg transferred to South East Division, with Don Oxenham returning to work with the Division.

47th Battalion results, winners A Grade Sunshine Coast/Gympie defeating Bundaberg, Under 19 Sunshine Coast/Gympie defeating the South Burnett.

2001

Bundaberg played host to the 47th Battalion competition during April with the finals being held at Caloundra during May. Sunshine Coast/Gympie defeated Bundaberg in both A and Under 19 grades.

The State Championships returned during the 2001 season after a six year absence and the Wide Bay team were the winners of this carnival. Winning this competition Wide Bay became the proud holders of the inaugural WIN Television Divisional Challenge Trophy.

The Division Under 17 team performed very well at the State Carnival and from that team Nick Parfitt gained Australian Honours with Antonio Kaufusi and Carl Cervenak gaining Queensland selection.

2002

Sunshine Coast/Gympie was victorious in the 47th Battalion competition and also the Under 19 grades. The introduction of, incorporating Clubs from the Fraser Coast, South and Central Burnett was designed to provide opportunity for players in these areas that were struggling for playing and club numbers. The Chairman's Challenge was won by Nanango.

2003

Long serving Executive Officer, Trevor Lindeberg moved on after twelve years in the position. At senior level, there was a marked decline in player numbers and clubs.

Bundaberg were victorious in the 47th Battalion competition and Sunshine Coast/Gympie winning the Under 19 grades. Dennis Moore was appointed coach of the Junior Kangaroos Under 19 to play Papua-New Guinea in Darwin.

2004

The AGM saw the retirement of our long serving Finance Director, Bill Chapman. After sixteen years. The loss of two Local Leagues (Central Burnett and Fraser Coast) was certainly felt during various discussions and debates. The South Burnett is in grave difficulty being unable to sustain a competition within its own right for 2005.

Winners of the 47th Battalion Memorial Trophy A Grade Sunshine Coast/Gympie and in the Retravision Shield Under 19 Sunshine Coast / Gympie were victorious.

In the Kissane Cup South West 20 defeated Wide Bay 6 and in the Win TV Country Carnival South East 36 defeated Wide Bay 18.

2005

Divisional Board members were made aware of a review of operations, positions, duties etc being conducted for the Queensland Rugby League. The former positions of Executive Officers have been abolished and new positions of Divisional Manager created with expanded duties and responsibilities with a component of autonomy not previously available.

The Fraser Coast Rugby League has their two strongest clubs Wallaroos and Hervey Bay taking part in the Bundaberg competition. Statistics displayed an excess of players remaining in the area and after some minor confrontation and the establishment of two fresh clubs a four team competition was organised with all games being played on a Friday night at Eskdale Park.

Two South Burnett teams (Nanango and Kingaroy) took part in the Sunshine Coast/Gympie 2nd Divisions competition with both teams taking part in the Grand Final. For 2006 season an amalgamation of both clubs has applied to enter "A" grade, Reserve grade and U/18 teams in the Toowoomba Rugby League.

For the past few years, three Local Leagues were in difficulties having their respective clubs being unable to perform in competitions within Wide Bay boundaries. During 2005 these difficulties were eased slightly for Central Burnett whereby with the agreement of Central Division a four team competition was arranged between Monto, Eidsvold, Moura and Calliope.

The Queensland State of Origin team showcased Casey McGuire, Ben Ross and Chris Flannery from the 1996 Under 16 team.

2006

In a further development, a separate club was formed on the Sunshine Coast to provide players from the Division the opportunity to compete at what is seen as the second highest level of week to week competition in Queensland. The Sunshine Coast Falcons had played in the inaugural Queensland Cup in 1996, but left at the end of the season. Following a number of clubs leaving what was then known as the Mixwell Cup (now known as FOGS Cup), the Sunshine Coast successfully applied for a position in 2006.

2006 started with the NRL Community Carnival game in Childers between a Wide Bay selection and the Brisbane Broncos development team. Although well beaten by the visitors, the game proved to be a

successful event for the region and provided Wide Bay with an early indication of players available for representative selection.

In March, an initiative of the Wide Bay Board to run a Club focused event over one weekend with the Bundaberg Rugby League club hosting the Bundaberg Toyota Wide Bay Club Challenge at Salter Oval, with the 16 A Grade sides from the Sunshine Coast/Gympie rugby league and the Bundaberg rugby league contesting. Noosa Pirates 30-4 victory over Caboolture in the final. In the second division, six clubs from the Northern Districts, Fraser Coast and Central Burnett competed with Eidsvold coming out winners. Eidsvold 22 d Monto 16.

The Peter Phair Report on the structural review of the game in Queensland was presented to the QRL Board.

2007

The year started off very well with the Maroochydore club hosting the QRL Wide Bay Club Challenge, with the 16 A Grade sides from the Sunshine Coast/Gympie rugby league and the Bundaberg rugby league contesting. A Noel Goldthorpe field goal three minutes from fulltime secured Noosa back-to-back Wide Bay Club Challenge titles as it beat Kawana 11-10. Completing two days of non-stop league action at Maroochydore, the Pirates pocketed the \$3000 winners' cheque in a high-quality final played in scorching heat. The intensity of tackling and seriousness with which both sides attacked the competition would have left fans in strong anticipation of the regular season. Temperatures approaching 40c could not halt the Kilcoy Yowies as they took out the wide bay club challenge division two title with a 10-0 win against Pomona Cooran. A positive for league in the Central Burnett was the reformation of the Mundubbera tigers for 2007 and their participation in the competition.

For the first time in many years, Wide Bay awarded a major game to Central Burnett with Mundubbera hosting the 47th battalion with Bundaberg 32 defeating Sunshine Coast/Gympie 20 in a grade, premier grade – Ted Weber trophy, wide bay south (Sunshine Coast/Gympie C Grade and South Burnett) 42 defeating Wide Bay North (Northern Districts, Fraser Coast, Central Burnett) 18 and in the Under 19 - Keith Perrin Shield Sunshine Coast/Gympie 34 defeating Bundaberg 24.

Southern Division and South-East Division combined to form the one area encompassing Ipswich, Brisaben and the Gold Coast.

Major Competitions

The Birch Cup 1914 - 1919 - The First Intercity Competition

Despite war clouds gathering on the horizon the League season in Wide Bay continued to produce consistent club football, closely contested intercity matches between Maryborough, Bundaberg and Childers. An intensive search by Maryborough Rugby League unearthed "The Birch Silver Cup" which would become the first major organised Intercity Competition in the Wide Bay and Burnett. Originally the Birch Silver Cup was donated by Messrs Birch and Coy, Black and White Whiskey fame, through their agents Corser and Coy Ltd Maryborough for a District Competition under Rugby Union Rules. The Cup was played for only one year and won by Bundaberg. It was decided that the Birch Cup would be played for by representative teams from Maryborough, Bundaberg, Gympie, Childers and Burrum. The purchase price of the Birch Cup was 80 Guineas.

The Inaugural Intercity Competition for the Birch Cup kicked off with five representative teams, Maryborough, Bundaberg, Gympie, Isis and Burrum. Gympie's Rugby Union team switched to Rugby League and affiliated with Queensland Rugby League.

The Leitch Cup 1924 - 28 (1) and 1929 - 33 & Federal Brewery Cup

A new trophy for Interdistrict Competition was donated by the then President Mr. A Leitch to be played for a period of five years, the team winning twice in succession or most times out of five to be the possessors. It would be known as the Leitch Cup. In 1928, the fixtures were Maryborough v South Burnett (Murgon), North Coast v Mary Valley (Gympie), Gayndah v Isis (Maryborough), Gympie v Bundaberg (Bundaberg). By winning the game Gympie finished on the same number of wins as Maryborough and as this was the fifth year of the Cup it meant a play off between the two sides to determine who should hold the Cup outright. The Wide Bay League met at Gympie to determine the venue for the play off. Because of the greater facilities Gympie was awarded the game. Gympie defeated Maryborough 23-10 thus becoming permanent holders of the Cup.

In 1929 Eight teams Maryborough, Bundaberg, Gympie, South and Central Burnett, North Coast, Burrum, Isis entered the second Leitch Cup Competition. In the semi finals Maryborough defeated Burrum 32-12 and Gympie defeated South Burnett 26-0.

The Bulimba Cup – 1934 - 1938

A new trophy the Bulimba Cup was donated to replace the Leitch Cup which was won outright by Maryborough. The Cup would be played for over a period of five years with the League having most wins gaining outright possession of the trophy.

Berger Cup - 1934

The Berger Cup was donated for competition between Maryborough, Bundaberg and Gympie. The Cup would be played for over a period of five years with the League having most wins gaining outright possession of the trophy. In 1938, Gympie defeated Bundaberg 20-11. Gympie became outright winners of the Cup.

Core Cup - 1934

In 1950, Bundaberg with two consecutive wins became the outright winner of the Core Cup. Bundaberg also won the Kerr Challenge Cup, Eldridge Shield (juniors) and Maryborough won the Geo McLeod Cup for the Third Grade Competition.

47th Battalion 1971 -

The 47th Battalion Memorial Trophy, symbol of Rugby League supremacy in Wide Bay in intercity competition has the distinction that it is the only Wide Bay Trophy to extend beyond the normal five years since intercity competition was introduced in 1915.

47th Battalion Results

PAST results in the 47th Battalion Memorial Trophy:

1971: South Burnett 21 d Gympie 9

1972: South Burnett 35 d Bundaberg 16

1973: Maryborough 35 d South Burnett 25

QRL Wide Bay Division History

Gary Dunbar - Division Manager

1974: Sunshine Coast 19 d South Burnett 11
 1975: Sunshine Coast 33 d Bundaberg 10
 1976: Maryborough 25 d South Burnett 23
 1977: Sunshine Coast 26 d Bundaberg 15
 1978: Sunshine Coast 32 d Maryborough 10
 1979: Sunshine Coast 35 d Gympie 33
 1980: Sunshine Coast 31 d South Burnett 14
 1981: Gympie 22 d Sunshine Coast 17
 1982: South Burnett 14 d Maryborough 13
 1983: Bundaberg 28 d Maryborough 12
 1984: Bundaberg 48 d Sunshine Coast 2
 1985: Maryborough 12 d Gympie 10
 1986: Gympie 26 d Sunshine Coast 12
 1987: Gympie 40 d Sunshine Coast 26
 1988: South Burnett 48 d Sunshine Coast 22
 1989: Sunshine Coast 46 d Gympie 20
 1990: South Burnett 34 d Bundaberg 25
 1991: Sunshine Coast-Gympie 36 d South Burnett 21
 1992: Sunshine Coast-Gympie 42 d Bundaberg 12
 1993: Sunshine Coast-Gympie 50 d South Burnett 6
 1994: Bundaberg 34 d Sunshine Coast-Gympie 18
 1995: Sunshine Coast-Gympie 27 d Bundaberg 18
 1996: Maryborough-Hervey Bay 30 d South Burnett 20
 1997: Sunshine Coast-Gympie 30 d Bundaberg 10
 1998: South Burnett 24 d Sunshine Coast-Gympie 22
 1999: Sunshine Coast-Gympie 20 d Maryborough-Hervey Bay 8
 2000: Sunshine Coast-Gympie 30 d Bundaberg 12
 2001: Sunshine Coast-Gympie 30 d Bundaberg 18
 2002: Sunshine Coast-Gympie 30 d Bundaberg 16
 2003: Bundaberg 16 d Sunshine Coast-Gympie 14
 2004: Sunshine Coast-Gympie 30 d Bundaberg 4
 2005: Sunshine Coast-Gympie 36 d Bundaberg 12
 2006: Sunshine Coast-Gympie 30 d Bundaberg 20
 2007: Bundaberg 32 d Sunshine Coast-Gympie 20

Queensland State of Origin Representative Players from Wide Bay
Queensland State of Origin Representatives Wide Bay 1980-2007(Game 1)

Backer, Brad	Maryborough
Brown, Dave	South Burnett
Flannery, Chris	Sunshine Coast/Gympie
Kiss, Les	Bundaberg
Larson, Gary	Northern Districts
Kaufusi, Antonio	Bundaberg
McGuire, Casey	Sunshine Coast/Gympie
Meninga, Mal	Sunshine Coast/Gympie
Mogg, Adam	Sunshine Coast/Gympie
Neibling, Bryan	South Burnett
Renouf Steve	South Burnett
Ross, Ben	Sunshine Coast/Gympie
Smith, Gary	Sunshine Coast/Gympie
Tessmann, Brad	South Burnett
Tonga, Willie	South Burnett

QRL Wide Bay Division - Life Members

QRL Wide Bay Division History
 Gary Dunbar - Division Manager

1946	Robert Kerr	Maryborough
1950	Eric Elwing	Gympie
1956	George McLeod	Maryborough
1958	John Salter	Bundaberg
1962	George Robinson	South Burnett
1966	Bill Vernados	Sunshine Coast
1967	Jim Hood	Maryborough
1968	Bert Quinn	Bundaberg
1972	Danny Tanner	Gympie
1976	Ralph Stafford OBE	Maryborough
1977	Bill Oliver	South Burnett
1979	Alan Marr	Sunshine Coast
1982	John Garrahy	Gympie
1983	Ron Wroe	Maryborough
1984	Ted Weber	Maryborough
1986	George Moore	Bundaberg
1987	Paul Goener	Maryborough
1988	Harry Swann	Gympie
1988	Fred Murray OBE	Sunshine Coast
1993	John Mullaly	Central Burnett
1996	Jeffrey Eyles	South Burnett
1999	Bill Chapman	Sunshine Coast/Gympie
1999	Ian Sanderson	Central Burnett

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